



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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HB 1049 - Transportation - Assaults on Public Transit Operators - Report Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee March 1, 2023

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President**

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1049. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

Assault on our public employees is an assault on all of us. In January, an MTA Mobility Link driver was shot and killed while at work¹. Just a few days later, a WMATA worker was killed while trying to prevent a mass shooting.² In 2021, there were three shooting deaths of transit workers.³ Dozens of incidents of attacks, assaults, harassment, and verbal confrontations never make the public news but are experienced by our transit workers every year.

We support HB 1049, but we believe sufficient data already exists to support past bills like 2022's SB 208, which made assaulting a public transit operator who was performing their duties a felony. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law already requires the Federal Transit Administration to collect data on transit worker assaults.⁴ Additional data collection and reporting will help transit workers make the case for expanded protections.

Transportation workers interact with the public on a daily basis. These workers are the face of our transportation system – providing top-notch service to everyone who utilizes public transportation – and they deserve the same respect and protection afforded to other public employees who are at risk of being assaulted on the job.

We encourage a favorable report for HB 1049.

¹ WMAR. "MTA mobility driver killed in "violent crime" during work shift." January 30, 2023.

² BBC News. "Washington DC metro worker who died tackling gunman is a 'hero'" February 3, 2023.

³ Justin George, "Third killing of a transit worker in Baltimore sparks calls for improved security." Washington Post. August 27, 2021.

⁴ Federal Register, "National Transit Database Safety and Security Reporting Changes and Clarifications." February 23, 2023.